(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The growth of private channels is providing competition to Doordarshan network in terms of veiwership and commercial revenue. This is however, limited mainly to cable and satellite homes, which constitute about 40%/45% of the total television homes. Doordarshan has the only terrestrial network, to which 89.6% of the population of the country has access. All India Radio is beginning to face competition with the entry of private FM Radio operators in some cities.

(c) to (e) Doordarshan/AIR are a public service broadcasters and cover many genres and themes of programmes, while private satellite channels/FM licenses are primarily driven by commercial interests. Prasar Bharati, which is an autonomous Corporation, has informed that Doordarshan/AIR have been improving programming structure and policies to counter the competition, while discharging their mandate as a Public Service Broadcaster. Various steps like appointment of expert Advisory committees, revised guidelines for bringing transparency and objectivity in programming, improvement in transmission quality and awards for excellence, have been taken to enhance the quality and content of Doordarshan programmes. AIR is also laying emphasis on improving quality of its software.

Access to Channels without cable

2602. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Doordarshan channels telecasting programmes at present;

(b) the number and names of channels that are available to viewers without the help of the cable operators;

(c) whether the non-availability of these channels without the help of cable operators violates the rights of the viewers to have free access to Doordarshan programmes; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to make available these channels without the help of cable operators?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Prasar Bharati has informed that 25 channels of Doordarshan are telecasting programmes at present.

(b) to (d) There are two channels which are transmitting programmes in terrestrial mode and are available to the viewers without the help of cable operators viz. DD-I and DD-II. These two channels are also available in the setellite mode through the cable network.

It is mandatory for every cable operator to re-transmit at least two Doordarshan terrestrial channels and one regional language channel of the State in prime band vide the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995. It is the constant endeavour of Prasar Bharati to obtain compliance of the provision of the Act with regard to compulsory transmission of the notified channels. Besides this, the Tenth Plan proposal of Doordarshan also contains a scheme for further expansion of terrestrial coverage DD-I and DD-II Channels. In addition, schemes for provisions of T.V. to uncovered areas, with multichannel bouquet in free to air mode, through transmission in KU band, are also included in the Tenth Plan proposals of Doordarshan.

Guidelines for foreign TV Channels

2603. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revise guidelines for TV news, in view of the entry of foreign-owned TV channels in the 24 hour news segment;

(b) whether Government have considered the pros and cons of the new scenario; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (c) Government is examining all the aspects related to the uplinking of foreign-owned news & current affairs TV channels.